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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: POLITICAL RALLY STYMIED BY KARZAI

Classified By: PolCouns Annie Pforzheimer for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) Summary: A 250-participant political rally to call for an interim government not led by Karzai was likely stymied by the Presidential Palace on October 1. The Afghan National Police (ANP) blocked the event for about two hours. Presidential palace interference seems further confirmed by the complete lack of media coverage of the event, despite attempts made by a handful of somewhat influential MPs to draw the media's attention. MP Mohammad Dawood Sultanzoy (Pashtun, Ghazni), one of the supporters of the rally, told us the night before the event, palace supporters called rally participants and warned them to stay away--he claimed that was why 250 instead of 500 participants attended. End Summary.

Call for an Interim Government

¶2. (C) The key organizer of the event was the self-claimed Bonn Agreement architect and designer Wahid Waheedullah, listed in rally documents as a UN Civil Affairs employee in New York. With a keen eye for marketing this event to the internationals, a 6-page color pamphlet written in English described his views on forming an interim government by holding a "Transitional Loya Jirga," followed later by new elections. He advocates for a change to the parliamentary system. He said this was the only way to obtain a legitimate government in Afghanistan after the flawed presidential elections. The leader of such an interim government would not be President Karzai. The group called this Loya Jirga the "Grand Jirga for Peace and Reconstruction in Afghanistan."

¶3. (SBU) The most notable guests at the event beyond Waheedullah were presidential candidate Shala Atta (Kabul, Pashtun), MP Mohammad Dawood Sultanzoy (Pashtun, Ghazni), Engineer Mohammad Asim (Tajik, Baghlan), and MP Sayed Ishaq Gailani (Pashtun, Paktika). Several of these individuals used to be staunch supporters of Karzai, but over the last five years, have made a political shift away from Karzai, accusing him of "a corrupt, ineffective government."

Rally Disrupted, Delayed

¶4. (C) According to an Embassy Local National who attended the event, while the rally invitees were arriving, the ANP started to block the entrance, saying the rally "was not allowed." The scene grew tense as more guests arrived, and the Intercontinental security forces got involved, while the ANP called for back-up. Journalists and media arrived on the scene, and eventually, the crowd heard that "the presidential palace has decided to allow the meeting." Due to the initial scuffling with the ANP, the event was delayed by several hours. MP Sultanzoy told us that the night before the event, palace supporters called rally participants and warned them

to not attend--he claimed that was why 250 instead of 500 participants attended the event.

No Press Coverage

15. (C) MP Ishaq Gailani told us a second Karzai government would never be more than a "corrupt, inept, and illegitimate administration." (Note: Ishaq Gailani stopped his steadfast allegiance to Karzai when he was not named the foreign minister, as was promised to him by Karzai in 2004. He remains somewhat estranged from the Pier Gailani side of the family, although some interlocutors suspect the Gailani's want to keep a hand in all ends of the political spectrum. End note.) MP Sultanzoy said the lack of press coverage was "proof that the Presidential Palace intervened." Although the Embassy staff member at the event saw media at the rally, recording the scuffle with ANP, the Embassy press section found no coverage of the rally.
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